

John D. Tully, *Ireland and the Irish-Americans, 1932-1945: The Search for Identity* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2010), ISBN: 0716529769.

Relations between Ireland and Irish-Americans have always been complicated. Relations at the time of World War I were the subject of thorough research by Alan J. Ward and Francis M. Carroll in the 1970s, and more recently by Bernadette Whelan and Michael Doorley. However, there was no research into relations between Ireland and Irish-Americans during World War II. This research gap has now been closed by John D. Tully with his book *Ireland and the Irish-Americans, 1932-1945*. In this well-researched study Tully follows the general pattern of comparing the Irish in Ireland with Irish-Americans in the United States. In particular, he examines the search for identity on both sides of the Atlantic, but in doing so tends to look more at national leaders than at ordinary people, and this may be seen as a weakness.

The question of identity is a crucial one in Irish and Irish-American history. Therefore Tully begins with an overview of Irish history, from Ireland's forced union with Great Britain, to the Great Potato Famine, and ending with the Easter Rising and the establishment of the Irish Free State. He reveals that the search for identity began in Ireland, where the Irish had been struggling for more than a century to define their country's identity as distinct from Britain's. However when Tully speaks of 'the Irish' he means the Catholic Irish and does not distinguish between them and the Protestant Anglo-Irish. Irish history has not been completed without highlighting that already in the eighteenth century, Irish identity was largely debated and defined by the Anglo-Irish elite, which monopolised political power until the Act of Union and even continued to be prominent in debates on nationality in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, Tully's book is very important as it shows the search for identity by the Catholic Irish who not only represented the majority of the Irish but who can also be seen as the 'true Irish Nation', as historians like D. G. Boyce argue.

On the American side, the millions of poor Catholic Irish who emigrated to the U.S.A. during and after the Great Potato Famine were treated with prejudice and rejected by Protestant Anglo-American society in the New England states. Tully further argues that by WWII, Irish-Americans had still not been fully accepted by or assimilated into American society. Tully's take on assimilation appears different from that of earlier historians of Irish-America like Kevin Kenny who suggests that assimilation was well advanced by the mid-twentieth century. This might be caused by the fact that Tully looks at new evidence of governmental documents and asks new questions about Irish and Irish-American identity and U.S.A-Irish relations. Therefore his historical overview with its new direction is one of the strengths of the book as it allows the reader to develop the necessary understanding of the Irish struggle for identity, not only in Ireland but also in the U.S.A.

Yet another strength of this volume is the detailed and thorough picture the book presents of the eve of WWII, from the war itself to its aftermath as seen through the eyes of the Irish on the one hand and Irish-Americans on the other. Tully goes on to develop a macro-level image of Irish and Irish-American identities from 1932 to the beginning of WWII in 1939 by following and comparing the activities of Irish president Éamon de Valera and American president Franklin Roosevelt. When the war broke out, both Ireland and America remained neutral at first. Nevertheless, David Gray, new American minister to Ireland, tried to press de Valera into entering the war. Tully contends that de Valera resisted by focusing on his dream of an independent and sovereign Irish identity.

Although Tully looks almost exclusively at national leaders rather than ordinary people, he gives the reader an understanding of how deeply the Irish dream of independence has been embedded in Irish thought. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, which marked America's entry into WWII, Gray's pressure on de Valera and the Irish government to enter the war became even stronger. Based on his extensive research in the United States, Tully proves that Gray was worried that Irish-Americans would split the Anglo-American alliance in order to push the British out of Northern Ireland. Here

lies the importance and the necessity of Tully's book: it demonstrates that the interests of the Irish and of Irish-Americans were treated like a shuttlecock by American interests on one side of the Atlantic and British interests on the other. With his radical statement that both the Americans and the British first of all served their own interests before they thought of the interests of other nations like the Irish or ethnic groups like Irish-Americans, Tully may be laying the basis for a new discourse about the role of Great Britain and the United States in WWII. Tully proves this through his analysis of the aftermath of WWII, when American leaders became convinced that Ireland would be a strong supporter of Western democracy. He argues that it was for this reason that America reduced its pressure on Ireland and consequently Ireland reduced its pressure on Irish-Americans who now had a better chance to assimilate into American society by maintaining a slightly weaker link with their Irish identity.

The strength of Tully's book is that it argues convincingly, at least on a political plane, that in times of crisis such as WWII, the Irish in America fell back on a strong nationalistic identity. He also makes the intriguing assertion that this reversion was in part influenced by the Irish in Ireland and their dream of independence. The general conclusion that may be drawn from Tully's book is that foreign affairs play a dominant role in the formation of ethnic identity. It may be hoped that future research will investigate this contention further in relation to private individuals, not just national leaders.

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